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AN ANALYSIS OF PARENT-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Submitted by

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(B.S. in Ed., Fitchburg State Teachers College, 1935)

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Education

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the problem.-- This study of the Worcester Council of Parent-Teacher Associations aims to reveal the effectiveness of this organization by:

1. Analyzing the activities of the Council over a three-year period in relation to the announced objectives of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.
2. Determining how active the principal of the school associated with each parent-school unit is in its activities.

The elementary schools of Worcester, Massachusetts, sponsor a number of parent-school units which are independent of the Council's fourteen parent-teacher units. Since the writer could not obtain a reasonably complete record of the programs of these independent units for the three-year period of the survey, these units are treated in the survey only in the relation which each bears to the principal of the school associated with the unit. The primary subject of the survey is the Worcester Council of Parent-Teacher Associations. Adequate treatment of the questionnaire returned by each elementary school principal required inclusion of the data concerning the independent parent-school

units. These data help to make clear how much more effective the units of the Parent-Teacher Association can be as agencies for promoting understanding between home and school.

Organization of the study.-- The following plan of work has been used in carrying out the two above-mentioned purposes of this survey:

1. A summary of the conclusions that some of the major works of previous writers on the Parent-Teacher Association movement have reached, including a statement of the goals of the Parent-Teacher Association as set forth in the Parent-Teacher Manual.
2. A study of the historical development of the Parent-Teacher movement in the United States, and the beginnings and growth of the movement in Worcester, Massachusetts.
3. A summary of the history, structure, and organization of the Worcester Council of Parent-Teacher Associations.
4. An analysis of the activities of the Worcester Council of Parent-Teacher Associations based upon a survey of the programs of individual units for the years 1944-1945, 1945-1946, 1946-1947.
5. A survey of the status of Parent-Teacher Associations in Worcester, Massachusetts, and of the activity of the elementary school principal in parent-teacher work, based on the results of a questionnaire sent to all the principals of the elementary schools of Worcester.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Importance of the parent-teacher association.-- Since the American school system aims to transmit democratic ideas and "greatly expand them in the future",[1] it has undertaken a task which it cannot do alone but only with the help it can get from the parents and from the community. Today, among all people who are responsible for the education of children, there is a firm conviction that all the agencies and individuals who affect the life and thought of the growing child must study together and reach an agreement on a program for child development which extends into the home, the school, and the community. The future life of the child is shaped by the influences around him, and it is the responsibility of his parents and his teachers to utilize for his advantage the best in thought, education, and protection that their co-operative efforts can achieve.

It is reasonable to suppose that since the child spends the greatest part of every day under the influence of the home, this force is primary in hampering or stimulating the normal development of the child; therefore "parents have the greatest

1/ The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, The Parent-Teacher Organization - Its Origins and Development (Chicago, Illinois: 1944), p. 11.

opportunity as well as obligation to make that influence such as will conserve the personality of the child, promote his education for life, and surround him with the encouragement and affection that is his due."1/ The teacher who has a knowledge of home influences will be better able to contribute to building her pupils' character. Parent and teacher are jointly and primarily responsible for what each child given into their care becomes, and, therefore, between these two influences there should be a co-operation which guarantees an exchange of information on all problems affecting the child and a firm purpose to work together for his greatest good. This unified co-operation can be most quickly and efficiently achieved by a program of parent education which will give to the parents a simplified conception of child psychology, mental hygiene, and a picture of their place in modern education. Any such program must provide opportunites for conferences by parents and teachers on child problems.

Throughout all the reports of the committees of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, it is suggested that parent education is an indispensable accompaniment of better children. The family is found to be an institution which fulfills such deep-seated needs of the human race that no forseeable outside forces will cause its eventual disintegration. The basic factor in the value of the family is the

1/Mrs. Hugh Bradford, "Foreword", Parent Education, 2nd Yearbook, August, 1931. p. V.

effect that the interaction of its personalities has in shaping an individual member. The functions of family life are listed under these four categories:

1. Control of environment - consists of giving the child his name and his standing in the community, ensuring his physical security, and guarding him against the effects of outside detrimental influences.
2. Inculcation of social values - is a function of family life which demands education for the parents of today because of the confusion which resulted from the break in the traditional method of bringing up children. This lapse of authoritarianism explained the failure of the old order to pass on to succeeding generations the practices and ideals of child care and training.
3. Orientation - is the process of familiarizing the child with his world - his family, his country, his world, and his universe.
4. Liberation and recreation - is assured the child when the family tries to relieve him from restraint and cushions the shocks he encounters in his contacts with the more impersonal world.

Every finding of this committee pointed to one conclusion, that parents need education in order to prepare their children for family life, marriage, and parenthood. Every person who touches the home in a professional capacity should be prepared to do so by training in the fields of mental hygiene and human

behavior. Parent education can smooth out the conflicts between family tradition and the social and economic world so active around the family. The committee concludes by stating its belief that parent education is the means "by which all the problems facing family life are brought into conscious consideration, traditions in this field are evaluated in the light of present-day living and knowledge, and new methods of adjustment are evolved."[1]

The Committee on Growth and Development also came out strongly in favor of parent education. Since the individual person is a product of heredity and environment, and since environment must be favorable if his outcome is to be satisfactory, parents must be trained for their task of shaping the child as he grows, and must confront and surround the child during his growth with intelligent attitudes on health and mental development.

The report of the Committee on the School Child stressed its awareness of the importance of complete co-operation between home and school. The school should co-operate with the home in matters concerning the education and health of the child without abridging the primary responsibilities of the parents in relation to their children. The committee considered the "summer round-up" of pre-school children for

1/Edna Noble White, "Research Findings of the White House Conference and Their Implications for Parent Education," Parent Education, 2nd Yearbook, August, 1931. p. 26.

correction of defects most helpful to the school, and gave as its opinion that responsibility for sex education should rest with parents who can prepare themselves for this important guidance by attendance at parent study groups. The report concluded by stating that the importance of the parent-teacher association in this kind of work is obvious, and commended it as an agency which has power to develop a harmonious and understanding co-operation between the home and the school.

The purposes of the Founders of the National Congress of Mothers, from which the present-day National Congress of Parents and Teachers developed, are in the code of rules which was presented to the Board of Managers at a meeting in the spring of 1897. The object of the association was to promote conferences by parents on all questions regarding the welfare of their children, their homes, and the general elevation of humanity; to hold annual meetings for the dissemination of the best thought on how to improve the physical, mental, and spiritual training of children; to encourage closer relations between home and school; to enlighten mothers upon all conditions of motherhood; and to promote the formation of Mothers' and Home-Makers' Clubs. From the above statement, there would seem to be no question but what the original purpose of the organization, briefly stated, was to understand children.

Criticisms of the parent-teacher association.-- But, as the complexities of life and education of the nineteenth

century increased, and as women began to have a greater understanding of the life going on about them, the members of the Mothers' Clubs and other informal organizations lost sight of the original purpose for which their units were founded as they began to use their new-found influence to reform the world. The National Congress of Mothers did not escape this reformist movement which was widespread during the early years of the twentieth century. Child study itself turned into a crusade.

Holbeck, in his analysis of the Parent-Teacher Association, maintains that this mis-direction of purpose and activity was prominent in Parent-Teacher Association programs at the time of his survey (1935). He began his study by making a comparison of the theoretical functions of the Parent-Teacher Association with the activities in which many local units of the Association engaged, and found that there was considerable discrepancy between the goals as stated by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and leading educational authorities and the programs actually carried on by the local Parent-Teacher Association units.

After a careful analysis of literature on the subject, supplemented by a study of the reports and conventions of the Parent-Teacher Association, Holbeck compiled a list of sixteen objectives toward which the work of every unit of the Parent-Teacher Association should be directed. This list was evaluated by forty directing officers of the Parent-Teacher Association and forty administrators in educational fields of work.

Holbeck explains the scoring as follows:

> The rank given an objective by the individual juror was considered the score for that objective. The total sum of such scores for a single objective would be the final score of each objective, as shown in Table I. A low score indicates a more important objective, since a rating of 1 to 16 in order of importance was given by each juror. The lowest possible score in point of importance is, therefore, 640. The highest possible score is 40. 1/

An examination of the Table reveals that there is a considerable amount of agreement about the comparative importance of the purposes and functions of the Parent-Teacher Association. The difference of opinion on 'Co-operation for the solution of school problems' is understood when it is assumed that administrators naturally tend to reserve this function for the schools. Both groups are in accord in believing that the Parent-Teacher Association should abandon non-educational activities in favor of a program designed to help the child by educating the parent.

Holbeck compiled Table II after a careful study of the work and programs of one hundred Associations, including an analysis of state and national reports as well as an examination of programs, periodicals, resolutions, meetings, and the opinions of administrators. The eleven activities comprising the table were then ranked in order of their importance by 200 jurors, evenly divided between Association presidents and

1/Elmer S. Holbeck, An Analysis of the Activities and Potentialities for Achievement of the Parent-Teacher Association with Recommendations (New York City: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, Contributions to Education, No. 601, 1934).

TABLE 1 +

IMPORTANT OBJECTIVES OF
PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS AS RANKED BY FORTY
ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTS AND FORTY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Objective	Presidents' Ranking		Administrators' Ranking	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
1. Providing information to bring about changes for the better in regard to child development, habits of learning, etc.	1	193	2	192
2. Providing an understanding of the parents' role in modern education, the values and opportunities of the P.T.A., etc.	2	198	1	163
3. Co-operating with the educational staff to solve school problems such as homework, reading habits, etc.	3	217	7	273
4. Providing a means for social intercourse between parents and teachers, etc.	4	230	4	236
5. Organizing and assisting study groups in child development, the parent-child relationship, generally known as "parent education"	5	237	3	233
6. Helping toward a better understanding of community conditions, need, etc.	6	286	6	264
7. Working to correct physical defects of children through such devices as the "summer round-up",etc.	7	301	10	358

+Ibid., p. 50

TABLE 1 (continued)

IMPORTANT OBJECTIVES OF
PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS AS RANKED BY FORTY
ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTS AND FORTY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Objective	Presidents' Ranking		Administrators' Ranking	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
8. Providing general knowledge of the school philosophy, curriculum making in relation to the changing social situation, etc.	8	304	8	280
9. Working on a legislative program for better school conditions, etc.	9	329	5	240
10. Supporting state, national organizations in their efforts for equalization of educational opportunities, etc.	10	358	9	328
11. Providing charitable relief for families of poor in the school district, etc.	11	381	14	434
12. Educating the public as to the Association's program, publicity set-up, etc.	12	420	13	379
13. Financing experimental work in the school curriculum to be used as demonstrators, etc.	13	423	12	377
14. Providing scholarships for gifted children.	14	476	11	367

TABLE 1 (continued)

IMPORTANT OBJECTIVES OF
PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS AS RANKED BY FORTY
ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTS AND FORTY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Objective	Presidents' Ranking		Administrators' Ranking	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
15. Making material gifts to the school such as pictures, radios, various kinds of equipment, not provided by the school board.	15	504	16	488
16. Providing a cultural program with no necessary emphasis on the needs of the child, etc.	16	514	15	452

TABLE II +

IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES
AS RANKED BY 100 ASSOCIATION
PRESIDENTS AND 100 SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Activity	Presidents' Ranking		Administrators' Ranking	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
1. Study Groups	1	273	1	308
2. Program of Parent Education	2	341	5	457
3. Study of Child Psychology	3	346	3	424
4. Study of School Work and Methods	4	436	4	431
5. Community Projects	5	561	2	419
6. Demonstration of Exhibits of School Problems	6	567	6	472
7. Publicity	7	603	8	527
8. Solving Certain School Problems	8	647	11	777
9. Social Intercourse	9	698	7	500
10. Entertainments	10	846	10	724
11. Making Gifts to the School	11	859	9	676

+ Ibid., p. 52.

and educational administrators, and the rank given an activity by the juror was considered the score for that activity. The total sum of such scores by the 200 jurors gave the final score for each activity as shown in Table II. A low numerical score indicates a more important activity.

The table shows:

1. That both groups of jurors agreed perfectly on activities numbered 1, 3, 4, and 10.
2. A low rating was given 'Entertainments' and 'Making Gifts to the School' by both sets of jurors.
3. Considering 'Solving of Certain School Problems' as an administrative prerogative, the school administrators placed this last.
4. The table shows that there is a tendency to get away from non-educational activities in favor of such worthwhile pursuits as Study of the Child, Education, and Parenthood.

Holbeck based Table III on the results of his study of the activities actually being carried on by the Parent-Teacher Association. One hundred Parent-Teacher Associations were studied, and the table shows the frequency with which the activities listed were engaged in.

An examination of these activities in the light of functions considered to be important reveals a considerable variance between function and activity. In the two previous tables, the jurors considered 'Making Gifts to the School' as one of

TABLE III +

ACTIVITIES CARRIED ON BY 100 PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY

Activity	Frequency
Study Groups	50
Relief for Children	40
Parent Education	35
Child Welfare	28
Purchase Equipment - Gifts	27
Summer Round-up	23
Know Your School	20
Health	20
Hot Lunches	18
Library	17
Beautify School	9
Community Projects	8
Card Parties	8
Literary Courses	3
Student Aid or Loan Fund	2
Character Education	2
Recreation	2
Lecture Courses	2
Playground	2

+ Ibid., p. 53.

the least important of the activities for any unit, but the table shows this function as one which occupies one of the highest places in the activities actually engaged in by this group. Many other items in the table have little or no relation to the stated purposes of the Parent-Teacher Association. They serve only to take time and attention away from the type of activity which should be engaged in by any unit of the Association, and thus weaken the potential importance of the Parent-Teacher Association as a whole.

The analysis of the Parent-Teacher Association undertaken by Holbeck was by far the most comprehensive, searching, and fact-finding investigation of this organization that the writer was able to uncover, and this summary of research on Parent-Teacher Associations would be incomplete without a presentation of the major conclusions that Holbeck reached. He found that the apparent ineffectiveness of the Parent-Teacher Association can be traced, in large measure, to the wide diversity of its interest, and its failure to produce programs which carried out the purpose of the organization, namely, to educate parents so that they would understand their duties in regard to their children. A host of entertaining but totally irrelevant activities have excluded the educational material which should certainly dominate the yearly program of every unit. Since there is an evident discrepancy between the avowed purposes and the actual activities of the association, it is recommended:

1. That the activities of every one of the more than 20,000 units of the Parent-Teacher Association carry out the purposes of the organization. The National Congress should:
   a. Join all interested educators in clarifying and restating its purposes, and present this revision of objectives to local branches together with a detailed plan of programs which would necessitate reorganization of activities on the part of local units.
   b. Provide, in its plan of programs, the possibility for local units to handle their own particular problems.
   c. Require local units to present a yearly program based on parent education.
2. That the functions of the school and the Parent-Teacher Association be set forth by an authoritative educational body which shall also determine the most desirable relationship between school and Parent-Teacher Association.
3. That leading educational institutions begin, by means of courses and institutes, to train leaders for adult education work in the Parent-Teacher Association, to the end that local units may have expert guidance in formulating a worth-while program.

4. That the Parent-Teacher Association units experiment with the unit plan of organizing programs.
5. That every unit of the Parent-Teacher Association continue to support itself.
6. That the local units of the Parent-Teacher Association receive recognition in the by-laws of the board of education of the community of which both are a part by having their rights defined.
7. That the publicity program be activated by the intelligent planning of leaders trained in this field by state associations.
8. That the Association increase its social power by taking a positive attitude and definite action on all educational problems.
9. That every unit of the Parent-Teacher Association embody the thinking and the approval of its own locality by acquiring a membership which is representative.
10. That the Parent-Teacher Association be familiar with the educational policy of its school, but refrain from entering the lines of action which are the special province of the school.
11. That the school administrator take an active interest in acquainting parents with the school in its interpretation of modern education.
12. That the faculty of the school appreciate its obligation

to further the aims of the Parent-Teacher Association.

13. That the business and entertainment periods of the programs be subordinated to the educational period by placing them more in the hands of the executive committee.
14. That intensive study of local problems by study groups in the Parent-Teacher Association be increased.
15. That a sound business procedure prevail in all financial transactions of the Association.
16. That a careful study be made of all parent groups independent of the National Congress for the purpose of obtaining all worthwhile information on such mutually beneficial matters as aims, functions, and community co-operation.
17. That membership turnover be studied for the purpose of determining the stability of local units and their influence.

The Parent-Teacher Association defends itself.-- It would seem to be no more than fair that a summary of the writings of the National Congress about itself should be included in this digest of the literature which has been written about the Parent-Teacher Association. The writer was not able to uncover any evidence in the nature of an investigation from within as to how faithfully the National Congress has clung to its original purpose, but the following quotation from a

Congress publication suggests a belief of steady adherence to the original aims:

> At no time in the history of Congress work were human services to childhood subordinated to any other dominant motive. In each field of human interest - physical, mental, religious, economic, political, artistic - it can be observed that no project or activity has existed for its own sake alone; rather it has justified itself in terms of the contribution made to the well-being of children. This was true in the earliest days of the parent-teacher movement; it has been true ever since.[1]

From 1897, the year when the National Congress of Mothers was founded, until 1910, the Congress was interested primarily in setting up a work program which would insure the child's safety and care. Showing an appreciation for the enlightened procedures being developed in the new child welfare centers, the Congress of Mothers strove to improve the physical and social aspects of child growth. "The creation of such committees as Child Labor, Education, Home Economics, and Child Hygiene was an outgrowth of the interest and effort that marked this period."[2] The program of legislation undertaken by this country as an attempt to eliminate the evils of our society which fell upon the shoulders of children was loyally supported by the predecessor of the present-day National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

In the next ten years from 1911 to 1920, the country

1/The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, op. cit., p. 177.

2/Ibid., p. 178.

experienced a many-sided growth in all aspects of education for health and physical fitness. Parents began to grasp the relationship between recreation and what it was that they were unitedly trying to accomplish. This resulted in a Congress-sponsored program of social health embracing such aspects of this topic as marriage sanctity, and racial health.

During the 1930's the country's educators tried to bring to the public's attention the necessity for developing the "social consciousness" of the child. They fought to do away with the old view that education consisted of mastering the three R's, and strove to make clear that education had to be concerned also with the child's connections with his friends, neighbors, and family. Education for citizenship was presented and accepted as a part of the school program, and this new emphasis resulted in the formulation by educators of new objectives of education for democratic American living. Accepting responsibility in the achievement of these new objectives, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers has incorporated them into its educational thinking, and endeavors to foster their practice in the yearly program of all its member units.

Goals of the Parent-Teacher Association.-- The fundamental purpose of the Parent-Teacher Association is to foster among schools, homes, and churches that type of co-operation which is the keystone of democratic American living. To

improve the practice of our national democratic way of life, we must provide for each generation of children an environment which will allow them to develop to the full in physical, mental, social and spiritual growth. Democracy depends upon the growth in children of sound individual and group habits.

Too many homes in America today are ill-equipped to make the child's home life and his school experience seem like the activities of one way of living. They seem to be concerned primarily with material and social success to the total exclusion of an attempt to develop attitudes which will make the child's home life a continuation of his school experiences, and even approve the existence and continuance of institutions which are a direct refutation of the sound teachings of good schools and homes.

The immediate function of the Parent-Teacher Association is to set up a medium whereby the attitudes and practices of the best homes and the philosophy of living and programs of learning of the best schools may be available to the entire community. The Parent-Teacher Association must unite the school and the home so that they may prepare the child to cope with the third great influence of his life - the community. The specific goals of the Parent-Teacher Association are:

1. To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church, and community.
2. To raise the standards of home life.
3. To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.

4. To bring into closer relation the home and the school that parents and teachers may co-operate.

5. To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.[1]

'To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church, and community.' Believing that every parent has the highest goals for his children, the parent-teacher movement has based its program upon that assumption and has continually developed under its guiding light. The parent-teacher organization is the tool through which the community of parents may exercise and profit by interdependence. The meetings afford an opportunity to pool all their problems related to children, to profit by the experience of other communities in the handling of problems, and to erect standards for the community.

'To raise the standards of home life.' The parent-teacher movement approaches this through parent education. The essential part of every effective parent-teacher unit is the professionally planned courses for parents of children at all school levels, and the study groups which are definitely devoted to the study of children at all ages.

'To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.' Adequate protection for children is

1/The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, Parent-Teacher Manual for Congress Parent-Teacher Associations. (Chicago, Illinois: 1945), p. 14.

secured by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers through a continuous study of conditions that bear directly or indirectly on growth. These studies enable the Congress to endorse or disapprove of legislative matters as they further or hinder the opportunity for children to attain a complete preparation for democratic living.

'To bring into closer relation the home and the school that parents and teachers may co-operate intelligently in the training of the child.' Considering that the development of a child is a continuous process, it is possible to approach maximum results in his training only if all the influences which shape his personality are harmoniously co-ordinated. Some correlation of these educational processes is achieved by the parent-teacher movement through a program of study, service, and comradeship which brings all of the parties - parent, children, and teachers into a working alliance.

'To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.' This is a measure which can best be realized by the Parent-Teacher Association through interpreting education, its program and its methods to the public as well as to its members.

The general public is very slow to admit the necessity for change in educational objectives and methods of obtaining

them. The modern school has a firm supporter in the parent-teacher movement which brings to the public's attention the new objectives, curriculums, and methods by means of which a more effective educational program can be carried out. This is accomplished by means of a program containing demonstrations, exhibits, discussions, and forums in the regular program of the Parent-Teacher Association.

The policies and guiding principles of the Parent-Teacher Association have been decided upon by representatives of the whole membership who have developed their decisions from experiences of members and leaders in every section of America over a long span of years. Some of these principles are:

1. "The Parent-Teacher Association is non-commercial, non-sectarian, and non-partisan."[1] The association will not endorse any commercial enterprise or single out any candidate for undivided support. Since the Parent-Teacher Association includes people of every faith and political preference, it cannot favor any particular product or process of commerce or political party.
2. The association will not realize a profit through the sale of any commercial publication.
3. The membership list cannot be used for advertising purposes.

1/The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, op. cit., p.27.

4. The field of politics is entered into by the association only to the extent of seeking the passage of legislative measures which are of general significance to child welfare.

5. The purpose of the Association is entirely educational and "it does not seek to direct the technical activities of the schools or control their policies".[1]

6. The Association enters into membership with Congress groups only.

7. "It is never a big stick to be used for punishment.
8. It is not a crutch to support the timid.
9. It is not a screen to hide the weakness of indifferent leadership.
10. It is a ladder by which we climb to higher levels of service.
11. It is armor to support strong leadership in the battle against special privilege.
12. It is a landmark by which we may find our way in a world with much to be done, with many desirable causes to enlist the interest of our membership, and with many places where our influence will count.
13. It is a compass designed to point the way back, should we be blown from our straight course by winds of indiscretion.
14. It serves the purpose of a fence along the right of way."[2]

This summary of the origins, progress, and present-day policies and goals of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers may be concluded by a statement of the Congress which reveals its unchanging purpose:

1/The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, op. cit., p.28.

2/The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, Guiding Principles for Parent-Teacher Associations (Chicago, Illinois:1946) p. 10.

> So, as parent-teacher tomorrows have turned into todays, the ideas, and programs of the association have undergone a gradual development, of which the fruits are seen in American communities far and wide. With the flow of events in a changing world, the pattern of activity has changed in ways that may make 1940 appear outwardly very different from 1900. Projects have changed, but purposes have not. And in those purposes there is a power that makes for achievement. If the era in which we live can rightly be called "the age of the child", it is due in no small measure to the fact that the parent-teacher movement has really moved, not merely existed.
>
> The movement goes on, as time goes on. There is no standstill. Even as these surveys called "Projects and Purposes" were being prepared, the past, of relative peace and security so far as our nation was concerned, was turning into a present of confusion and uncertainty. But where the welfare of the child is concerned, no course is thinkable but an onward course. It is the glory of the P.T.A. that it is stable but not static - the expression of an unchanging purpose in a swiftly changing world. 1/

The writings of present-day educational authorities are, for the most part, in pronounced agreement on the mutual benefits to community and school which can be derived from a properly administrated parent-teacher organization. R. H. Lane has the following to say on this subject:

> If there is no P.T.A. in your school, see that one is organized and be sure that it commences its services under the most competent leadership available. The P.T.A. in the right hands can be a tremendous power for good in your school, and you will be pleasurably surprised at the intelligence, sound common sense, and loyalty of the average parent. Parents are people, and they are worth cultivating. 2/

Kyte shows a thorough grasp of the broad potentialities of the organization when he says:

1/The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, op. cit., p. 180.

2/Robert Hill Lane, The Principal in the Modern Elementary School (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1940, p. 37.)

> Because of its fundamental objectives, the parent-teacher association should be one of the best organizations for producing thorough understanding between school and community, conveying to the former representative public ideals and ideas, and to the latter, insight into the adopted educational program.[1]

In the summary of his survey of the work of the Parent-Teacher Association, Holbeck stated:

> As an existing organization within the limits of which much might be accomplished, the Parent-Teacher Association has a great potentiality of service.[2]

There seems to be no question but what the Parent-Teacher Association finds favor in the eyes of most educational authorities of today. They are agreed that such an adult group, properly directed by competent leadership from within the units and guided by the principal of the school with which the unit is associated, can materially assist the school in carrying on certain phases of the school work. The National Congress of Parents and Teachers has set up policies for co-operating with the schools without entering the province of the professional people engaged to carry on the work of public education. A sincere endeavor by parents and teachers to co-operate would seem to be all that is needed to establish a relationship which would further the best interests of the child.

1/George C. Kyte, The Principal At Work (Ginn and Company, 1941) p. 426.

2/Holbeck, op. cit., p. 95.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF THE PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION IN THE UNITED STATES

The present-day Parent-Teacher Association movement had its beginnings around the year 1855 when, immediately following the development of the kindergarten, there came about a feeling that mothers and teachers could accomplish more for the children if they brought together the knowledge that each group had of the pupils. At first this feeling found expression only in occasional and informal meetings, but it soon developed into meetings which organized under such headings as the Parents' League, Mothers' Unions, Pre-School Circles, and Reading Councils. These organizations had no expressed philosophy to guide their activities, but conducted meetings solely for the purpose of satisfying a desire to bring into closer harmony the two outstanding influences on the growing child - School and Home.

In 1894 a national convention of mothers was held in Chicago, under the auspices of the Chicago Kindergarten College, whose principal was Miss Elizabeth Harrison. This first convention, on September 26, 1894, was so well attended that it was necessary for the audience to leave the college for a neighboring church in order to accommodate the number of

mothers who came. The second mothers' convention, also held in Chicago under the auspices of the Chicago Kindergarten College, was a three-day session, and all people, including teachers, who were interested in the study of child nature were invited to attend. The third meeting was held in October 1896, and its program was directed by Miss Harrison and Mrs. J. N. Crouse.

At all of these conventions one of the most enthusiastic listeners was Mrs. Theodore W. Birney of Washington, D.C. She was born in Marietta, Georgia, where her early life was spent. In 1892 she married Mr. Birney and moved to Washington where her husband engaged in the practice of law. Mr. Birney had a deep interest in his wife's ambition to bring together the mothers of the country, an interest spurred on by the three little daughters in his own family. As a result of the cordial reception given to her address before a group of mothers at a kindergarten meeting in Chautauqua in the summer of 1895, Mrs. Birney called a National Congress of mothers to Washington, D. C.

Miss Emma Morton, sister of the man who was then Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, was a confidant of Mrs. Birney, and she was instrumental in bringing together Mrs. Birney and Mrs. Pheobe Hearst. Mrs. Hearst was kindly disposed toward the plan for a National Congress of mothers and her generous contributions of skill and money made

possible the start of the present-day great and growing National Congress of Parents and Teachers. Mrs. Hearst and Mrs. Birney became co-founders of the National Congress of Mothers which was inaugurated on February 17, 1897.

All through the year of 1896, Mrs. Birney sent out copies of a circular letter to educators and social workers in an attempt to gather nation-wide opinion of the advisability of a national congress of mothers. Her letters reached every state of the Union and mothers in Canada, England, Germany, France, Australia, Peru, Brazil, China, Japan, India, and the Hawaiian Islands, heard from her and sent back prompt and enthusiastic replies.

In spite of their carefully planned and executed publicity, the founders expected no such overwhelming response to their first Congress as appeared in Washington on February 17, 1897. Accommodations at hotels and in the proposed places of meeting were entirely inadequate, and everyone in attendance was outspoken in favor of forming a permanent organization. Thus the National Congress of Mothers came into being. The first president was Mrs. Birney, and the first vice-president was Mrs. Phoebe Hearst.

The objectives were stated in the charter as follows:

> This is to certify that we, the undersigned, being persons of full age, citizens of the United States and a majority of whom are residents of the District of Columbia, have associated ourselves as a corporation for benevolent and educational purposes. The title by which said corporation shall be known is the National Congress of

Mothers. The term for which it is organized is twenty years from and after the first day of May, 1900.

The object of this corporation shall be to promote conference among parents upon questions vital to the welfare of their children, to further develop the manifold interests of the home, to co-operate with educators and legislators, to secure the best methods of physical, mental, and moral training of the young; to enlighten motherhood upon all conditions of mothers in all walks of life and to these ends; to promote the formation of Mothers and Home-Makers' Clubs in all states and territories of the United States. The number of its directors or managers for the first year shall be eight.

The charter was granted by the District of Columbia, November 20, 1900.[1]

The forming of a permanent organization of Mothers also served to realize the ambition of Miss Elizabeth Harrison for an organization which would help and train the mothers of the land.

The establishment of the National Congress of Mothers, as a permanent institution, resulted in great activity throughout the country in the formation of Mothers Clubs and Home-Makers Clubs, all of which had for a purpose to give "scientific help to mothers in meeting the many problems arising in the home".[2] New York formed the first state branch of the National Congress of Mothers, and other states which set up branches of the Congress in early years were Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Illinois, and California. By 1920, every state, with the exception of Nevada had a comprehensive state organization. Membership has grown from 31,672 members in 1912 to 3,910,106 men and women today enrolled in over 26,000 local parent-

1/National Congress of Parents and Teachers, A New Force in Education (Washington, D.C., 1929), p. 24.

2/Ibid., p. 24.

teacher units.

The mothers soon found that to have an organization capable of carrying out the third foundation aim - "to co-operate with educators and legislators to secure the best methods in the physical, mental, and moral training of the young"[1] - they had to incorporate all the educative forces in the life of the child. This called for the entrance of fathers and Parent-Teacher Associations. A parent-teacher department was established in 1907 to promote co-operation between the home and the school, and the name of the Congress was changed to the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations. This bulky name was again changed in 1924 to its present title, The National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

Many mistakes were make in the early, pioneering days of the Parent-Teacher Associations. The national leaders had had no experience in conducting their far-flung associations, and their ideals could not readily be transmitted to local leaders, who were also without experience in their field of work, and frequently had little real leadership ability. No courses or literature was available on parent-teacher relationships, and many associations refused to enter the National Congress but continued to cause confusion by listing themselves as Parent-Teachers Associations and setting up standards at variance with those of the National Congress. The national

1/ Ibid., p. 24.

organization found it necessary to concentrate heavily on problems of organization, promotion, and management. Since the chosen method of carrying out the work of the organization was by the establishment of committees, it was necessary to secure individuals to serve on these committees, and this proved to be no easy task. The only real inspiration for local associations to establish a program which would be in keeping with the announced general purposes of the organization came from the highly important annual meeting, and the particular means for carrying out the general purposes of the organization "were largely determined by the individual Mothers' Clubs and Circles, which were being formed rapidly all over the country".[1]

Another influence which has served to hinder the development of the National Congress in the accomplishment of its general purposes can be traced back to the period immediately following the Civil War. The first Mothers' Clubs were well formed at about the time that this country was experiencing many changes in industrial life occasioned by the Civil War. These material changes were accompanied by such other alterations in this country's pattern of life as population concentration in large cities, radical changes in the amount of freedom granted women, and new concepts of social life and

1/The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, op. cit., p. 139.

ways to amuse people. The change having most influence on the subject of this study was that of the status of women. Freedom from the drudgery of pioneer days gave them the opportunity to grasp the change that was occurring in the direction of a more complex way of life, and they began to organize in an attempt to remedy some of the ugly aspects of civilization.

Women who had no interest except their home and children became aware of the changes of educational theory that had accompanied the industrial world's surge forward, and wished to know more about the host of factors which reacted on their children and made life so much more complex for them.

But, as the century wore on, women lost sight of the original purpose of their clubs - to understand children - and began to use their influence to reform the world. This confusion of purpose which began early in the century still is with the Parent-Teacher Association. The writings and speeches of today suggest that the Parent-Teacher Association is concerned only with educating the parent so that he may better prepare his child to live in the present rapidly changing times, but a survey of almost any local unit's programs shows that a most extensive diffusion of interests still persists.

The Congress of 1926 stated the objectives of the organization as follows:

1. To promote child welfare in home, school, church and community; to raise the standards of home

life; to secure more adequate laws for the protection of women and children.

2. To bring into closer relation the home and the school that parents and teachers may co-operate in the training of the child; to develop between educators and the public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, moral, and spiritual education.[1]

That the Congress did not adhere very closely to these principles when it came to translating them into action is readily apparent when the resolutions adopted by the National Congress are examined:

1. Complete enforcement of prohibition.

2. A program of education to protect children by law and public opinion (child labor).

3. A program for World Peace.

4. A Federal department of education with a secretary in the President's cabinet.

5. Extension of the Shepherd-Towner Act beyond June 1927.

6. Narcotic education as a means of combatting the menace of drug addiction.

7. A commission on illiteracy and strict endorsement of the compulsory education law.

8. Re-affirming of position regarding salacious literature, continuing to arouse public protest against the sale of objectionable magazines.

9. Favor establishment of National Teachers' Day for the recognition of teachers.

10. Program for safety and thrift education and a diversified recreational program which shall contribute to the moral education of youth.[2]

1/The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, Handbook (1926) p. 1.

2/Holbeck, op. cit., p. 13.

But educators themselves were guilty of tolerating this diffusion of interests on the part of an organization that had possibilities for being of great service to the schools. Many people working in the schools feared the interest that parents showed in schools and tried to direct their resultant activity into fields not connected in any way with the education of children as carried on in the schools. As a direct result of this manifested feeling by educators, the Parent-Teacher Associations' activities were directed into different and less important fields.

Mrs. E. C. Mason, speaking at the Conference at Columbia University under the auspices of the Teachers' College and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers made this clear when she said:

> For some years, and in some organizations at the present time, the chief activities centered around providing equipment for the school. All sorts of entertainments were given to raise money for all sorts of things which the school was supposed to stand in need of; pictures, victrolas, pianos, drinking fountains, playground equipment, furnishings for teachers' rooms, even screens for the windows. There was, doubtless, a reason for these expenditures. They were actuated by the horror felt by affectionate parents who left their cheerful and comfortably furnished homes and went for the first time in their lives to make monthly visits at the school house where Jane and Jimmie spent at least five of their waking hours. The three R's were supplemented by the three D's, dull, dirty, dreary. Square rooms with bare walls. Monotony, stern right angles, lack of color and beauty everywhere inside. Bareness and bleakness outside. No wonder there were early campaigns to raise money and enrich the equipment, even though it would have been wiser to to arouse the school authorities to make the improvements from public funds.[1]

1/ The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, op.cit. p. 26.

This mis-direction of purpose, tolerated by both parents and educators, now shows indications of being brought to an end due to the fact that educators of today regard education as a day-long process and admit the Parent-Teacher Association as a medium for realizing this process.

The writings of authorities in the field of home-school relations are generally in pronounced agreement on the benefits accruing to both home and school from an active and enlightened Parent-Teacher Association. W. A. Yeager has this to say in favor of the organization:

> In summarizing the parent-teacher associations, it is pertinent to note the strategic position held by this organization as a home-school-community relations agency. In the writer's opinion, none equals it in importance and potential significance. Upon whatever levels of participation the school may be organized, the association may be found useful in achieving the ends sought.[1]

The following quotation from E. S. Holbeck's analysis of the Parent-Teacher Association also lends weight to the validity of the above statement. He says:

> Meanwhile, however, the educators who, on the whole, had been indifferent or hostile toward the Parent-Teacher Association have, under the influence of modern educational theory, come to view it in a new light. Many of the most forward-looking among them now regard it as a medium for the parent education which is vital to the success of the modern school. And many leaders of the Parent-Teacher Association are also realizing that this program of parent education represents the most fruitful contribution which the Association can make to the welfare of the child.[2]

1/William A. Yeager, Home-School-Community Relations (University of Pittsburgh, 1939), p. 366.

2/Holbeck, op. cit., p. 95-96.

In 1925 a National Council on Parent Education was formed from the many unrelated groups of mothers who were still interested primarily in child study. This council and organizations formed in large cities for the same purpose influenced the National Congress to the extent that in 1929 the Congress, using foundation funds, established a department of parent education for an experimental period of three years to encourage its many councils and local units to study child psychology and child needs under capable leadership. This is still going on and represents to some extent a return by the National Congress to its former and original purpose.

Today the Congress aims to get things done as well as to act as an agency for parent education. Skillful management, especially on the principal's part, can enable these two functions to be carried along together with no friction. The desirability for parent education is clear whenever there is necessity to gain general acceptance for new methods and curricula, and the potentialities of the parent-teacher association as a medium for educating parents to support the school in its attempt to achieve maximum results from the child are great. Therefore, the school and the Parent-Teacher Association should be in complete agreement and free from discord.

Some authorities are inclined to the belief that the program of parent education should be incorporated in the established public school system of a city or town. Such a

program would necessarily have to be adjusted to the needs of the community and should not be undertaken until the functions connected with parent education are clarified and co-ordinated.

CHAPTER IV

HISTORY, STRUCTURAL AND FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION OF THE WORCESTER COUNCIL, P.T.A.

History of the Council.-- The Worcester Council of Parent-Teacher Associations was organized on May 28, 1935, at a meeting held in the Young Women's Christian Association building in Worcester. Mrs. Paul C. Kelsey, State President, and Mrs. Arthur B. Webber, Eastern Field Secretary, were present to furnish professional guidance, and Mrs. Roland F. Hall of the May Street Parent-Teacher unit became the first president of the new Council. The first slate of officers also included Mrs. James W. Armour as Vice-President, Mrs. William Bennett of the Greendale unit as Secretary, and Mrs. George W. Billington of the Malvern Road unit as Treasurer.

For the benefit of the school children of the city, the Council voted to take over the sponsorship of the Junior Entertainment, a movement which had been launched the previous year by the May Street Parent-Teacher Association to bring to the community's children the best possible entertainment in the field of music. It had been a very satisfactory activity, inasmuch as over 3000 children had attended, and the committee in charge of the enterprise had realized a profit for the

next year of $150. Aiming to keep it a non-profit activity, the Junior Entertainment Committee voted to turn over to the Council the sum of $50, and set the remaining $100 aside as a separate fund to be used in succeeding entertainments as necessary.

The State Convention of Parent-Teacher Associations was held in Worcester in October 1935, and this gave the new Council its first opportunity to take part in state affairs. The theme of the convention was "Progressive Programs for Education and Educators", and Mrs. J. K. Pettengil, the National First Vice-president, was present to deliver the address, the title of which was "The Place of the Parent-Teacher Movement in Adult Education".

In December 1935 the Council presented two performances, for elementary and high school pupils, of the Junior Entertainment, and followed up this beginning by programs in January, February, and March. The series of musical entertainments was not a financial success, but the Council managed to meet all obligations by running a bridge party in April.

The first annual meeting, in May 1935, was highlighted by a report from Mrs. Swallow, legislative chairman, that petitions for the new Junior High Schools had been prepared and were to be distributed. The following month saw the first School of Instruction appear, and its subjects included organization work and how to conduct an annual meeting.

Further recognition of the significance of the new Council was forthcoming at the State Convention the following October when Mrs. George E. Deering was elected Director of District No. 7, which included Worcester.

The Council's growth as a functioning organization is revealed in the following list of activities:

1. In April 1937 the first District Conference was held at the Worcester Y.W.C.A. under the direction of Mrs. George E. Deering, the District Director.
2. In 1937 the Council was represented at the National Convention in Richmond, Virginia, by three delegates.
3. The first P.T.A. Forum was held in February 1938 at the Lincoln Square Boys' Club, and featured Henry Atkinson, President of the Massachusetts Civic League.
4. A series of lectures during 1939 by Supt. Walter S. Young of the Worcester School Department as follows:
   a. October 25 - "Elementary Schools"
   b. November 8 - "Junior and Senior High Schools"
   c. November 22 - "Special Departments"
   d. December 13 - "School and City Finances"
5. A series of study groups from year to year featuring such worthwhile subjects as the following from the program of 1939-1940:
   a. September 27 - "Understanding the Growing Child"

b. October 17 - "Training for Leadership"

c. October 27 - "Recreation Through Music"

d. February 2 - "Understanding Ourselves"

Structural and Functional Organization of the Council.--As set forth in Article I of the Council's By-Laws, the complete title of the organization is The Worcester Council of Parent-Teacher Associations of the Massachusetts Parent-Teacher Association, Incorporated. The Council has twenty-two member units at present, fourteen of which are affiliated with schools in the city proper. The By-Laws stipulate that the "Council shall meet for conference and co-operation in matters of child welfare. It shall not legislate for Congress units".[1] This limits the Council to an advisory capacity only. Each unit pays an annual assessment of $2 to the Council.

Election of a president, two vice-presidents, a secretary, and a treasurer takes place annually, and no officer, except the secretary and the treasurer, may hold office for more than two consecutive terms.

To obtain more detailed information about the units, a copy of the following questionnaire was sent to the President of each unit:

1/Worcester Council, P.T.A. By-laws, Article II, Section 2, p. 1.

QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE ANSWERED BY THE PRESIDENTS OF
THE UNITS OF THE WORCESTER COUNCIL - P.T.A.

1. What is the name of your P.T.A. unit?

2. How many members do you have at present?

3. How were new members secured this year?

4. How were new members enlisted in the last two years?

5. Name the officers of your unit. (The positions, not people's names.)

6. What standing committees does your unit have for this year?

7. What special committees have been appointed for this year?

8. Who prepared the monthly programs for each meeting this year?

9. At the present time, when and how often do you have meetings?

10. Do the teachers attend? What per cent of the school's teachers attend?

11. What were the dues for the year 1946-1947?

12. When was your P.T.A. unit established?

13. How many programs for this year will have had children on them?

14. How many times will teachers take part in this year's programs?

15. Are the minutes of your unit's meetings kept in a volume capable of withstanding year-to-year usage?

16. How far back does this record of the unit go?

17. How is the treasurer's report audited? That is, by whom?

18. How much money will you collect this year in the following ways?

    a. Dues
    b. Socials
    c. Food sales
    d. Bridge and whist parties
    e. Other ways

    (Please estimate each to the best of your ability)

19. How will your money be spent for this school year? (Please indicate what you will spend it for and how much each item will get)

20. What has your unit done to influence the School Committee or the Superintendent as to school policy?

21. What work has your P.T.A. done to influence public opinion?

22. Did you have a summer round-up last summer? How many children did you examine?

23. Does the principal of your school seem enthsiastic about P.T.A. work?

24. Do you feel that your P.T.A. Council has the active support of the Superintendent?

25. What offices in your unit are held by teachers or the principal?

26. Have you had any child-study groups planned for this year? If so, please list them.

27. What do you consider to be the chief need for your unit at the present time?

28. How does your unit obtain the publicity you feel that it needs?

The units have the privilege of setting the dues for their members, and from the dues received there is forwarded annually to the State Congress ten cents, and to the National Congress five cents for each individual member. As Table IV reveals, there is almost universal agreement on the fifty-cent annual assessment which is only one source of income for most units. Since nine of the fourteen city P.T.A. units were established after the founding of the Council, in 1935, it may reasonably be assumed that this progressive step forward was instrumental in initiating many of these newer units.

Questions 2, 3, and 4 of the questionnaire sent to all city P.T.A. units were concerned with present membership of the unit and the methods which had been used to build up the enrollment. The median membership for the Council's units is eighty-nine active members, but, since the schools associated with these same P.T.A. units have a median pupil enrollment of 316, as Table IV shows, it is evident that much can be done to make the units' membership more completely representative of the school population. The various means listed in Table V of encouraging non-member parents to join have increased the membership of some of the units to quite respectable proportions; it is to be regretted that the principal of the school does not take a more active part, since an indication of his interest in increased enrollment would probably be most effective.

The uniformity which exists among the units in the custom of offices is brought out in Table VI. Although some replies to the question did not make it clear, it is a policy of the Council to accord honorary membership to every principal whose school has a P.T.A.

The mean of Table VII, which summarizes the number and types of committees set up by the units, is not strictly accurate since two units did not list their committees. A third unit evidently misinterpreted the question, and answered 'none', but it is not probable that it is totally inactive.

TABLE IV

NUMBER OF YEARS ESTABLISHED, MEMBERSHIP, AND DUES
OF WORCESTER COUNCIL, P.T.A.

Unit	Pupil Enrollment	No. of Years Established	Membership of Unit	Dues
Andover Street	169	7	65	$ .50
Burncoat Street	395	11	90	.50
Downing Street	368		100	.50
Gates Lane	556	11	75	.50
Greendale	401	33	75	.40
Harlow	401	8	62	.50
Indian Hill	186	5	87	.50
Lake View	373	8	61	.50
Lee Street	317		137	.50
Malvern Road	170		55	.50
May	368	13	87	.50
Nelson Place	290	12	130	.50
Roosevelt School	164	11	64	.50
Thorndyke Road	274	12	166	.50
Total Number	4432	131	1251	$6.90
Mean	316	11.9	89	.49

TABLE V

METHODS OF INCREASING MEMBERSHIP
BY UNITS OF WORCESTER COUNCIL, P.T.A.

Method	Frequency of Mention
Cards sent to Mothers	4
By oral invitation at each meeting	4
House-to-house calling	4
Phone calls to possible members	2
Kindergarten mothers greeted on first day of school and invited to join	2
Personal contact	1
Notices of meetings sent home by all children	1
Membership committee	1
Principal invited mothers of new pupils to join	1

TABLE VI

WORCESTER COUNCIL, P.T.A. UNITS'
OFFICES FILLED BY ELECTION

Title of Office	Frequency of Mention
President	14
Honorary Vice-President	8
First Vice-President	13
Second Vice-President	13
Secretary	13
Treasurer	14
Two Council Members	1
Chairman of Nominating Committee	1
Recording Secretary	1
Corresponding Secretary	1

TABLE VII

STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES
IN UNITS OF WORCESTER COUNCIL, P.T.A.

Type of Committee	Frequency of Mention	
	Standing Committee	Special Committee
Membership	11	
Hospitality	8	
Publicity	8	
Library and Radio	8	
Program	7	
Better Films	6	
Ways and Means	5	
Auditor	4	
Finance	4	
Scouts and Brownies	4	1
Study Group	3	
Publications	3	
Music	3	1
Nominating	3	
Bowling	3	
Magazine	3	
Art	2	1
Cards and Flowers	2	
Safety and Health	2	
Legislation	2	
Parlimentarian	2	
Hostess	2	
Rummage Sale		2
Bridge		2
By-Laws		1
Cub-Pack		1
Properties	1	
Christmas Party		1
Sunshine	1	
Tea	1	
Notices and Attendance	1	
Parents' Night		1
Dinner		1
Snow Removal		1
	99	13
	13	
Total Number of Committees	112	
Mean - 14 committees per Unit		

Boston University
School of Education
Library

The number of committees appointed by each of the units ranged from twenty-four down to four. Many of the committees listed in the Table have little or no reason for being part of the activities of a parent-teacher unit. Committees for Bowling, Rummage Sales, Teas, Dinners, and Snow Removal, to mention a few, are a far cry from the underlying purpose of the Parent-Teacher Association - to educate the parent for the child's welfare. The Council might advisably attempt to cut down the diversification of activities among the units suggested by the conglomeration of committees in the above Table by suggesting to the units the number and kind of committees best suited for the units' proper functioning.

As Table VIII makes clear, in only one instance was the principal consulted in formulating the yearly program. Whatever the reason for his omission may be, it is regrettable since the principal understands the school set-up much better than the lay members of his Parent-Teacher Association; he could steer the program committee toward the exploration of subject matter which would tie together the home and the school more effectively.

Since the adult education aspect of the program's monthly meetings is the prime reason-for-being of the Parent-Teacher Association, every unit in the Council should place its program-planning in the hands of a program committee composed of the unit's most capable members.

A study of Table IX reveals that teacher attendance is

TABLE VIII

ORIGIN OF THE WORCESTER COUNCIL
P.T.A. UNITS' MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Planning Group	Frequency
Program Chairman	4
Program Committee	2
Program Chairman and Officers	3
Executive Board	2
Program Committee and Principal	1
Officers and Executive Board	1
Vice-President and Executive Board	1
Total	14

TABLE IX

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOUR
OF MEETING AND TEACHER ATTENDANCE
IN UNITS OF WORCESTER COUNCIL, P.T.A.

P.T.A. Unit	No. of Meetings		Teacher Attendance
	Afternoon	Evening	
Unit 1	5	3	100%
Unit 2	8		100% (when possible)
Unit 3	8		100% (at social period)
Unit 4	8		60% (at social period)
Unit 5	8		50%
Unit 6	8		33%
Unit 7	6	2	25%
Unit 8		8	To some extent
Unit 9		8	Varies at each meeting
Unit 10	8		Not many
Unit 11	2	6	Occasionally three or four
Unit 12	8		Seldom
Unit 13	8		Very few
Unit 14	8		None
Total	85	27	

heavier when the meetings of the P.T.A. are held in the afternoon. Afternoon meetings, however, do not permit the teachers to take part in, or profit by listening to an educational program. Their presence does help materially in uniting home and school by affording parents a regular opportunity to confer with them. Several questionnaires mentioned that teacher-attendance was impossible because the meetings were held at an early hour in the afternoon. It is interesting to note that the units which hold all their meetings in the evening have been less successful in attracting the teachers to the meetings. Possibly the units holding afternoon meetings secure more attention from the school faculties because it is so much easier for the teachers to remain in the building for the meeting. To most profitably aid the child, a larger proportion of each unit's meetings should be in the evening when father, mother and teacher can attend.

Pupil participation in the monthly meeting was found to be 10 per cent greater than teacher activity. The children were in 27 per cent of the meetings for the calendar year 1946-1947, while the teachers' average was only 17 per cent for the same year. In agreement with the preceding Table, it was revealed that the units holding their meetings in the afternoon reported the greatest participation by teachers in their meeting. In two questionnaries, the authors of the papers interpreted the question on teacher-participation as referring to teacher-attendance, and reported the teachers

of their schools taking part in such special meetings as Parents' Night and Guest Night. This hardly fulfills the intent of the question which aimed to find out to what extent the faculties have aided in furthering the P.T.A.'s fundamental purposes.

The beneficial influence that the founding of the Council, in 1935, had on P.T.A. activity in the city evidently carried over into the management of the individual units, for every unit initiated after the Council was organized has a complete record of its financial transactions and the activities engaged in since its activation. All units reported that they have, in recent years, made it a practice to keep a permanent record of the reports of their secretary and treasurer. Six of the fourteen P.T.A. units employ an auditor to make a yearly inventory of their finances, four units delegate this responsibility to members of the schools' teaching staffs, and three entrust the task to members of the unit itself.

As Table X discloses, the chief source of income for every unit, with one exception, was the social affairs carried on through the year. The most popular money-raising activity was the Bridge or Whist Party, with Rummage Sales next in popularity. If these dependable sources of income could be maintained without allowing them to substitute for educational meetings, then the units' effectiveness would be greatly enhanced. One of the best arguments in defense of sponsoring social activities is that their money-raising aspect insures

TABLE X

SOURCES AND AMOUNT OF ANNUAL INCOME
FOR UNITS OF WORCESTER COUNCIL, P. T. A.

Unit	Dues	Social
1	$ 32.50	$ 100
2		300
3	50.00	150
4	28.00	75
5	18.75	211
6	31.00	265
7	60.00	43
8	20.00	135
9	67.50	195
10	30.00	130
11	50.00	205
12	65.00	296
13	32.00	158
14	83.00	296
Totals	$567.75	$2559
Mean	40.55	182.78

a type of co-operation which results in people knowing each other better. The total median income for the units during the year 1946-1947 was $223.33.

The expenditures listed in Table XI are a compilation of what each P.T.A. unit estimated it would spend during the year when the questionnaire was returned to the writer. The total outlay does not approach the sum of the receipts given in Table X. Evidently many of the respondents were not completely familiar with the intended expense accounts and so could not reply in full detail. It is gratifying to note that the schools are the most favored single recipient. The item 'School Equipment' covered a number of different articles such as projectors, delineascopes, athletic equipment, and record players. An item which deserves much greater consideration by all the units when they plan the handling of their funds is the amount set aside for speakers. The talks given by these speakers have been the chief method of carrying on the adult-education program sponsored by the units. Since speakers fulfill a fundamental purpose-for-being of the associations, they deserve more financial consideration than Paries, Refreshments, and Scouts, the items which precede Speakers in Table XI.

Aside from attending a public forum sponsored by the Council, the units have not been very active in bringing their views on school policy to the attention of either the School Committee or the Superintendent. From two of the

TABLE XI

HOW THE WORCESTER COUNCIL, P.T.A. UNITS SPEND THEIR INCOME

Expense Item		Amount
School Equipment		$ 617.60
Parties for School Children		150.00
Refreshments		116.00
Scouts		95.00
Speakers		87.00
Conventions		75.00
Community Organizations		74.00
Community Chest	$30.00	
Red Cross	23.00	
Polio Fund	10.00	
Cancer Fund	9.00	
Operating Expenses		70.00
Food Sale		65.00
Council Dues		34.00
Gifts		32.00
Room Prizes		18.00
Glasses for Children		15.00
Veterans Hospitals		10.00
Better Films		9.00
Nurse Girl		8.00
Radio Program		5.00
Teacher-Training Fund		5.00
Council Bridge		2.00
Total		$1487.60

P.T.A.'s there was mention of letters to the Superintendent and the School Committee, but such a demonstration falls far short of the determined front that all the members of all the units could put forth through the Council.

The purpose of Question 22 was to try to determine to what extent united action had been resorted to by the units to sway public opinion on child-welfare issues. In general, the answers received showed either that the authors of the questionnaires had failed to grasp the purport of the question, or that they had done virtually no campaigning in this important field. A widespread program of telephoning or letter-writing to the School Committee and the local newspapers on such popular present-day matters as teachers' salaries could not easily be ignored by the forces governing such matters.

The Summer Round-up of pre-school children for the purpose of preparing them for their entrance to school in September has temporarily disappeared among the units. No unit conducted a round-up in the summer of 1946, and the burden evidently fell upon the City Health Department.

The answers to Questions 24 and 25 struck a more cheerful note. With two exceptions, all units felt that the principal of the school associated with their organizations was enthusiastically interested in maintaining good parent-teacher relationships, and there was universal agreement that the Superintendent of Schools actively supported the P.T.A. Council in its work.

The fact that during the P.T.A. year 1946-1947 no teacher was elected to office by any unit confirms previous indications that all the P.T.A. units are at present parent-dominated. Aside from the honorary vice-presidency accorded to the principal of each unit's school, only eight teachers served in any official capacity for this year. Considering that the parent-teacher units required no less than 112 committees to function for the year in question, the slighting of the faculties, be it intentional or necessitated by circumstances, is evident. Such a state of affairs can hardly be expected to foster effective co-operation between these two primary influences on the child's development, and therefore steps should be taken by all units to correct the situation in future years.

The study group, one of the most advantageous and economical ways of bringing to all members a body of information relative to child welfare, has found no favor with the Parent-Teacher units, some of whom attend the seminars promoted by the Council. It is unfortunate that the efficiency which characterizes the publicizing of P.T.A. activities does not carry over to the formation and functioning of these more important study groups. The local newspaper, The Evening Gazette, has very consistently published all P.T.A. activities under the title "P.T.A. Doings". Other methods of publicity include sending home announcements by the school children, the telephone, and the publication of a monthly

bulletin.

Although five units failed to give an answer to the query on what was considered to be the unit's chief need, a few replies were received which suggest that their authors are in complete agreement with the conception set forth by many educational authorities of the purpose of a parent-teacher organization. "To work for the welfare of children in our community", "Study groups, and a means of caring for children so that more mothers may attend meetings", "More interest in cultural programs", and "Better understanding between teacher and parent concerning the visiting" are answers which reveal an enlightened insight into the fundamental purpose of a parent-teacher association - to understand children.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE WORCESTER COUNCIL - P.T.A.

The problem of this study is to determine what relationship exists between the activities of the units of the Worcester Council of Parent-Teacher Associations and the announced objectives of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, to contrast the Parent-Teacher Association units with other parent-school units, and to ascertain how active the Worcester elementary school principal is in promoting parent-teacher co-operation. Since the problem has two principal parts, the writer will begin with a presentation of material relative to the program activities of the units making up the P.T.A. Council, treat other parent-school units in this phase of the problem's development, and then go on to treat the principals' relationships to their units.

SURVEY OF MEMBER UNITS' PROGRAMS

Before trying to establish how closely the units of the P.T.A. Council carry out the objectives of the National Congress, it would seem advisable to suggest briefly these objectives:

1. "To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church, and community.

2. To raise the standards of home life.

3. To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.

4. To bring into closer relation the home and the school that parents and teachers may co-operate intelligently in the training of the child.

5. To develop between educators and the public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education."1/

Briefly stated, the principal objective of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers is to educate the parent for the welfare of the child. Holbeck expresses a parallel view when he says: "Many leaders of the Parent-Teacher Association are also realizing that this program of parent education represents the most fruitful contribution which the Association can make to the welfare of the child."2/ That the National Congress advocates for every member unit a constructive educational program is confirmed by the following quotations from the Policies for the Congress: "The program of the Congress shall be educational and shall be developed through conferences, committees, and projects."3/ "The real purposes for which parent-teacher associations are organized are to be found in the fields of parent education, home and school co-operation, and community betterment."4/

1/The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, op.cit,p.14.

2/Holbeck, op. cit., p. 95

3/The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, op. cit., p. 181.

4/Ibid., p. 181

In approaching the task of analyzing the programs of the units of the Worcester Council P.T.A. in the light of the announced objectives of the National Congress, the writer began by collecting the programs of each unit for the years 1944-1945, 1945-1946, 1946-1947. Since the aim was to survey the Parent-Teacher Association in the elementary schools of Worcester, Massachusetts, no attempt was made to secure the programs of the member units attached to schools outside the city limits. The programs for the three-year period were obtained for each of the fourteen units associated with the Worcester schools, and a compilation of their meeting activities for the period in question appears on the following pages.

Since this breakdown of activities in Table XII reveals that an activity which could be definitely educational has predominated in the units' programs for the three-year period, namely, 153 speakers, the writer set out to determine, by the title of the speech in the program what probable connection each talk could have with the ultimate objective of the National Congress - to educate the parent for the welfare of the child. The results are set forth in Table XIII and indicate that in seventy-two out of the 153 occasions on which a speaker was the principal event of the meeting, his subject had absolutely no educational value which related to the welfare of the child. That the reader may have a clearer concept of the

TABLE XII

ACTIVITIES ENGAGED IN BY UNITS OF THE WORCESTER COUNCIL, P.T.A. OVER THE THREE-YEAR PERIOD 1944-1947

Activity	Frequency of Occurrence
Speakers	153
Annual Meeting and Election	28
Annual Bridge	21
Christmas Party	20
Parents' Night	19
Program by School Pupils	14
Penny Sale	11
Fathers' Night	7
Films	6
Musicale	5
Founders' Day - Reception to Past Presidents	3
Food Sale	2
Class Demonstration by School and Teacher	2
Bazaar	2
Tour of Art Museum	2
Girl Scout Program	2
Installation of Officers	2
Pollyanna Party	2
Table-Setting Contest	1
Singer	1
Nomination of Officers	1
Health Program	1
Attic Corner Sale	1
Bridge and Tea	1
Frankfurt Roast	1
Dinner	1
Round-Table Discussion	1
Cooking Demonstration	1
Birthday Party	1
Exhibition of Childrens' Books by Librarian	1
Teachers' Reception	1
Play	1
Program on Air Transportation	1
Display of Childrens' Work	1
Trip to Dolls' Paradise	1
Book Review	1
Reception to New Principal	1
Minstrel Show	1
Total	335

TABLE XIII

SPEAKERS' CONTRIBUTION TO PARENT EDUCATION BEFORE UNITS OF WORCESTER COUNCIL, P.T.A.

Type of Lecture	Number of Lectures
Talks Unrelated to Child Welfare	72
Talks Related to Child Welfare	58
Talks of Doubtful Value	23

6

6

nature of the talks which are classified as being irrelevant to the purposes of the Parent-Teacher Association, the following are given as typical: "A Day With Nancy Burncoat", "News in Home Decoration", "Heritage of the Cathedral", "Song Portraits and Folk Lore in Costume", and "Demonstration of Flower Arrangements".

The following titles of lectures are typical of those which were classified as of doubtful educational value: "The World We Face", "A Trip into Mexico", "Can the Great Faiths Co-operate?", "The Travelers' Aid Society and What It Does". Lectures such as "Child Guidance Facilities in Worcester", "The Child in the Family", "Current Trends in Educational Psychology", "You and Your Child", and "Immunization of the School Child" were considered to be unquestionably educational in value and content and should make up the bulk of future meetings where it is planned to build the evening's program around a speaker.

Table XIII makes clear that far too many meetings of the various units have centered around a speaker who, while he may have been interesting, could have contributed but little to the educational background of his listeners in regard to child welfare. Only 38 per cent of all the lectures whose subjects are taken into consideration seem to bear directly on the subject of child welfare, and, since all units show evidence of relying extensively on speakers for the feature of

their meetings, it would appear advisable that they make a more determined attempt to secure lecturers whose subjects will be in keeping with the purpose for which the units have been organized.

Table XII lists many other activities which cannot truly be considered as in line with the objectives of the National Congress. It is hard to see how child welfare can be promoted by programs built around a table-setting contest, a frankfurt roast, a tour of the Art Museum, or a Founders' Day Program.

A compilation of activities engaged in for the purpose of raising money over the three-year period appears in Table XIV. The Table discloses that the average for each unit is one activity per year. This is in keeping with what the National Congress has to say on the ethics of money raising, which is as follows:

> One large entertainment, carefully planned, can usually be made the occasion for raising the funds necessary to finance the legitimate activities of the association for the year. This entertainment should be of definite educational value, but should also be of social value in helping people to get acquainted and to have a good time by working and playing together.1/

That there is little "definite educational value" in the money-raising activities listed in Table XIV can hardly be gainsaid.

Table XII represents the activities of 335 meetings of

1/National Congress of Parents and Teachers, op. cit., p. 181

TABLE XIV

TYPES OF MONEY-RAISING ENTERTAINMENTS
UNDERTAKEN BY WORCESTER COUNCIL, P.T.A. UNITS

Type	Frequency
Annual Bridge	21
Penny Sale	11
Food Sale	2
Attic Corner	1
Bazaar	2
Minstrel Show	1
Total	38

the fourteen units in a three-year period. If the activities in this Table were grouped on the basis of their relationship to the advancement of child welfare, the table would then look like Table XV. The classifications here are arbitrary and are made solely on the writer's interpretation of the outstanding objectives of the Parent-Teacher Association - educating parents for child welfare. In the writer's opinion there is no definite educational value for parents to pass on to their children in any of the activities listed under the term 'Irrelevant'. Many of the items in the 'Questionable' category may have been scheduled for amusement purposes only. This might quite possibly be true of such activities as 'Films', 'Play', 'Round-Table Discussion', and 'Christmas Party'. Of the 335 activities, 123 or 36 per cent are definitely out of touch with the worth-while aims of the National Congress, while only 102, or 30 per cent can be classified as in harmony with the aims of the Congress.

Before leaving this very important aspect of the survey, the writer wishes to call attention to another weakness of the yearly programs. Many units have made a custom of selecting a theme for the yearly program, but they have failed almost wholly to relate the activities of the meetings to the theme. The practice of selecting a worth-while theme is commendable, but the yearly program can be considered equally commendable only if each meeting relates to and imparts a portion of the

TABLE XV

RELATIONSHIP OF WORCESTER COUNCIL, P.T.A. PROGRAMS TO CHILD WELFARE

Pertinent		Questionable		Irrelevant	
Activity	No.	Activity	No.	Activity	No.
Speakers	58	Speakers	23	Annual Meeting and Election	28
Parents' Night	19	Annual Bridge	21	Table-setting Contest	1
Fathers' Night	7	Christmas Party	20	Musicale	1
Class Demonstration by School and Teacher	2	Penny Sale	11	Singer	1
Program by School Pupils	14	Health Program	1	Nomination of Officers	1
Exhibition of Children's Books by Librarian	1	Films	6	Bridge and Tea	1
Display of Childrens' Work	1	Attic Corner Sale	1	Founders' Day Reception to Past Presidents	3
		Round Table Discussion	1	Frankfurt Roast	1
		Teachers' Reception	1	Dinner	1
		Bazaar	2	Cooking Demonstration	1
		Book Review	1	Tour of Art Museum	2
		Reception for New Principal	1	Birthday Party	1
		Play	1	Girl Scout Program	2
		Food Sale	2	Installation of Officers	2
				Pollyanna Party	2
				Program of Air Transportation	1
				Dolls' Paradise	1
				Minstrel Show	1
				Speakers	72
Totals	102		92		123

knowledge suggested by the theme.

It is evident that altogether too often entertainments and unrelated program activities have made up the yearly programs of the member units, thus excluding worth-while educational material and activities. The Council could do much to rectify this situation by:

1. Asking each member unit to submit for approval its program for the coming year.
2. Consulting with the program committee of each unit for the purpose of giving advice on how to select worth-while themes and build meetings around them.
3. Sending to each member unit all available information on topics which would be of educational value.
4. Compiling for circulation among the units a list of local speakers whose talks would be distinctly aimed at educating parents for child welfare.

THE PRINCIPAL'S RELATION TO THE P.T.A.

As an introduction to the analysis of the principal in relation to the Parent-Teacher Association in the Worcester public schools, it might be well to try to determine what relationship should exist between these two educational forces which have the same objective - the child's welfare. This may well serve to clarify the conclusions drawn from this part of the survey.

In general, writers in the field of educational administration are agreed that the purpose of the school is to foster the continued growth of its pupils, and that this

growth goes on outside of school as well as within. Since child growth is a continuous process, it can be most effectively guided by a close partnership between home and school. The P.T.A. can be the force which co-ordinates education at home and in the school.

Lane reveals his conception of the value of the P.T.A. to the school when he says:

> If there is no P.T.A. in your school, see that one is organized and be sure that it commences its services under the most competent leadership available. The P.T.A. in the right hands can be a tremendous power for good in your school, and you will be pleasurably surprised at the intelligence, sound common sense, and loyalty of the average parent. Parents are people, and they are worth cultivating.[1]

Holbeck is more emphatic in his statement of the necessity for an organization linking home and school when he says: "Educators must accept responsibility for keeping parents informed of what is going on in school."[2] He goes on to suggest that a definite need for a Parent-Teacher unit should first be discovered in a community by the parents who will compose the membership. Then the principal can hold meetings of interested parents to discuss local problems and needs, and make clear from the beginning what the purpose of a parent-teacher association is. The principal's part, at this initial stage, consists in building "up in parents a belief that such an organization would help to solve the problems peculiar

1/Lane, op. cit., p. 37

2/Holbeck, op. cit., p. 30.

to both home and school".[1]

Kyte brings out very definitely the constructive attitude that every principal should take toward the P.T.A. He says:

> Co-operation being the keynote of the parent-teacher association, it presents a challenge to the principal to serve as a constructive leader in the organization, to assist its members in keeping uppermost in their activities the realization of its stated purposes, and to aid in drawing into its membership all teachers and parents.[2]

Jacobson and Reavis also point out the part that the principal may play in guiding the parent-teacher organization toward fulfilling its purpose. They say: "A wise principal will work unobtrusively with the program committee to suggest topics or demonstrations which will enlighten parents."[3] On this same point, Otto has this to say:

> The intelligent principal is constantly alert to seize every opportunity to direct the activities and the programs of adult groups so that they will be a constructive influence in the school and will be learning about the scientific developments in modern education instead of imposing outgrown ideas upon the school.[4]

Every principal can be reassured of the value of this organization to his school by such quotations as the following from Jacobson and Reavis:

> That the parent-teacher association need not be a stumbling block but may be a vital force in interpreting

1/Holbeck, op. cit., p. 27.

2/Kyte, op. cit., p. 427.

3/Jacobson, Paul B., and William C. Reavis, Duties of School Principals (Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York:1941) Pp. 739-740.

4/Otto, Henry J., Elementary School Organization and Administration (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1944) p. 484.

the schools is attested by the fact that over one-half of the principals who were questioned in the National Survey of Secondary Education considered it one of the most important means of securing co-operation, while only 2 per cent considered it a hindrance.[1]

It is not unreasonable to conclude, then:

1. That every principal should establish a parent-teacher association in his school, if possible.
2. That every principal should assist in guiding the organization towards realization of its stated purposes.
3. That every principal should try to draw into the membership of the unit all eligible parents and teachers.

In an effort to determine how active the principal associated with each unit of the Worcester Council was in the program of the organization associated with his school, the writer sent to each elementary school principal in the city a questionnaire, a copy of which follows:

QUESTIONNAIRE ON PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS
AND MOTHERS' CLUBS
FOR ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS

Name of the school:

Principal's name:

1. Does your school have a Parent-Teacher Association or a Mothers' Club?

2. If not, have any parents ever expressed any interest

1/Jacobson and Reavis, op. cit., p. 739-740.

in having an organization formed at your school?

3. Do you think that a P.T.A. or a Mothers' Club would add appreciably to the educational set-up of your school?

Note: To be answered by Principals who have a P.T.A. or a Mothers' Club associated with their school.

1. How many grades - (not rooms) - in your school?
   1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8
   (Circle the grades in your school)

2. Approximate number of P.T.A. or Mothers' Club members in your school?

3. How often does the unit meet?

4. Where does the unit usually meet, that is, in what part of the building?

5. At what time does it generally meet?

6. What is your conception of the purpose of such a unit?

7. In response to what particular need was the unit of your school formed?

8. Does the principal attend all meetings?

9. Do all the teachers attend all meetings? Do some teachers attend all meetings?

10. Is the principal a member of the managing or executive committee of the unit?

11. Does this membership place the principal in a position to advise as to a number of the most helpful lines of effort for the unit such as:
    a. What activities to engage in to best fulfill the purposes of the unit?
    b. What the content of the yearly program should be?

12. Are all the parents who attend given an opportunity to meet the teachers at the unit's meetings? How is this done?

13. Is there an attempt to draw into the P.T.A. or Mothers' Club unit all eligible parents and teachers?

14. What is done in the way of assisting parents to become constructively parent-educated minded?

15. What has been done to assist teachers to become constructively parent-educated minded?

16. What kind of activities are provided to give the parents a knowledge of the school's activities?

Of the fifty-four principals receiving the questionnaire, all replied, making the survey 100 per cent complete as far as the elementary schools of the city are concerned. The questionnaire was divided into two parts so that the schools having a parent-school organization might be easily separated from the schools without such a unit.

In answer to the question, "Does your school have a Parent-Teacher Association or a Mothers' Club?", it was revealed that there were fourteen parent-teacher association units, sixteen organizations associated with as many schools under such headings as Mothers' Clubs, Neighborhood Club, and Parents' Club, while twenty-six schools had no organization of any kind to promote that co-operation between home and school which educational authorities deem so necessary. These three groupings are set forth in Table XVI.

The Mothers' Clubs and other school organizations are not now associated in a city-wide council which is in a position to furnish guidance in the formulation of their yearly programs.

TABLE XVI

PARENT-SCHOOL UNIT REPRESENTATION
IN WORCESTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Group	Number
Schools having no association	26
Schools having Mothers' Clubs, etc.	16
Schools having Parent-Teacher units	14
Total	56

TABLE XVII

REPORT OF WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS, ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ON STATUS OF PARENTAL
INTEREST IN FORMING A PARENT-SCHOOL
ORGANIZATION
(By Schools)

Group	Number
No interest	20
Interest	5
Interest leading to forming an organization	1
Total	26

In answering question 2, six principals indicated that there had been some expression of desire on the part of parents associated with their schools for some type of parent-school organization. Only one of the six principals admitted his intention of going forward with the formation of an organization during the school year 1946-1947.

As has been suggested above, the best time to form a parent-school organization is whenever parents show a desire for such a unit. The principals of the five schools where parents have signified a wish for closer co-operation between home and school have an ideal condition for forming an effective association between the two forces shaping the child's life and should proceed to do so.

As Table XVIII makes clear, twenty principals of schools where no parent-school organization existed were definite in their belief that such an organization would be of no benefit to their school.

TABLE XVIII

ATTITUDE OF WORCESTER, MASS., ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TOWARD PARENT-SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS

Group	Number
Of no benefit	20
Doubtful	4
Definitely helpful	2
Total	26

Two principals answered the question affirmatively, one of the two indicating that a unit was to be formed in the near future. Four principals qualified their answers with such remarks as "a good pressure group to keep up the physical properties of the building", "I would prefer to study all factors in the district first before judging", and "In some ways, yes; in other ways, no".

The second part of the questionnaire was answered by those principals who have a parent-school organization in their schools. Table XIX illustrates, by grades, what part of the city's school children are represented by parent-school units. Of all the schools having eight grades, 46 per cent have no parent-school organization; 50 per cent of the schools having seven grades have no such organization, and 40 per cent of all schools having six grades are, at present, without any type of organization which might effectively bring home and school into a working union. Assuming, for rough comparison, that each school has as many rooms as grades, then 46 per cent of all the elementary school children in the city are without a close tie-up between home and school.

Table XIX makes clear that in many of the parent-school units, particularly those not associated with the Parent-Teacher Association, there is a marked disparity between the size of the school population and the membership of its parent unit. To be properly representative of the community

TABLE XIX

NUMBER OF PARENT-SCHOOL UNITS
IN WORCESTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

8-gr. Sch.	No. of pupils	PTA Mem.	Par-Sch. Mem.	7-gr. Sch.	No. of pupils	PTA Mem.	Par.-Sch. Mem.	6-gr. Sch.	No. of pupils	PTA Mem.	Par.-Sch. Mem.
1	274	160		1	164	65		1	368	200	
2	368	100		2	164		No. ans.	2	317	135	
3	556	84		3	265			3	169	65	
4	186	75						4	170	60	
5	401	75						5	387		100
6	401	75						6	253		75
7	373	50						7	402		75
8	290	No.ans.						8	190		50
9	395	No.ans.						9	163		36
10	350		80					10	292		35
11	238		75					11	190		25
12	221		50					12	282		
13	420		50					13	155		
14	257		45					14	45		
15	516		40					15	469		
16	283		20					16	208		
17	560		No.ans.					17	336		
18	312							18	127		
19	312							19	259		
20	357							20	367		
21	375							21	227		
22	330							22	454		
23	434										
24	522										
25	473										
26	385										
27	206										
28	193										
29	569										
30	728										

of which it is a part, a parent-school organization associated with a school of 516 pupils should certainly have more than forty members. The Parent-Teacher Association has evidently been more successful in acquiring and keeping membership, since it has one adult for every 3.2 pupils in the schools with which it is associated, while the remaining parent-school units can claim a membership of only one adult for every 5.5 pupils in the schools they represent.

In answering the question "What is your conception of the purpose of such a unit?", the items listed in Table XX appeared in the principals' replies in the frequency shown. "Co-operation between home and school" was mentioned most frequently by the principals of the schools associated with each type of unit. In only two instances was "Parent-education for child welfare" definitely mentioned, neither one being associated with a parent-teacher association. It would, therefore, seem advisable for all principals whose schools sponsor a Parent-Teacher Association to reacquaint themselves with this fundamental purpose of their parent-unit, since parent-education has been declared by the National Congress to be basic to the program of every member unit. Then this group of principals will find themselves ready to lend effective guidance to the unit in the formulation of its yearly program.

In his analysis of the Parent-Teacher Association,

TABLE XX

THE PURPOSE OF A PARENT-SCHOOL UNIT AS SET DOWN BY WORCESTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Purpose	Frequency Mentioned	
	PTA Principals	Other Par.-Sch. Unit Principals
Concrete Assistance	3	5
Understanding of school and home problems	3	3
Parent education for child welfare	1	3
Social		2
Co-operation between home and school	6	6
Total	13	19

E.S. Holbeck pointed out the desirability of forming a PTA as a result of a felt need on the part of parents making up the school's community. He further suggested that the principal might encourage in parents the belief that such an organization could do much to resolve the problems of home and school. In Table XXI, only two or three of the reasons for forming a parent-school organization suggest that the organizers had a proper conception of the part their unit should play in relating home and school. If the organizers of the units were under a misapprehension as to the purpose of the units, and if such a misunderstanding continues to dominate the activities of the organization, as the preceding analysis of the Council's programs suggests is the case, then the principal should proceed to clarify the aims of the unit for all its members.

That the principals of schools sponsoring a parent-teacher association are working in harmony with their units is clearly indicated by their record of attendance as set forth in Table XXII. Although this group of principals is much more consistent in attendance than their colleagues who are associated with other parent-school units, it is evident from the table that neither group of principals has succeeded to any extent in inducing the teachers of their schools to be present at all meetings. Regular attendance on the part of the principal is most desirable, since it gives him an

TABLE XXI

REASONS GIVEN BY WORCESTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS FOR FORMULATION OF PARENT-SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Reason	Frequency Mentioned	
	PTA Principals	Other Par.-Sch. Unit Principals
General desire for meeting together	2	
Closer relation between home and school		4
To be of service to the school		2
Foster extra-curricular activities		1
Reason unknown	4	4
No answer given to the question	5	4
Because other schools had such a unit	1	
Excuse for attending the National Conventions	1	
Interest in the school		1
No need for such a unit	1	
Total	14	16

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TABLE XXII

REPORT OF WORCESTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ON ATTENDANCE OF PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS AT PARENT-SCHOOL UNIT MEETINGS

Classification of attendance	PTA		Other Parent-School Units	
	Frequency		Frequency	
	Principals	Teachers	Principals	Teachers
All meetings	11	1	3	1
Some part of all meetings		2	2	1
Frequently		2	1	
Whenever possible	3	1	1	
Infrequently		3	1	
Evening meetings				
None		3	7	13
No Answer		1	1	2
Total	14	13	16	16

Note: Each figure in this Table refers to an answer given by a principal who has a parent-school unit associated with his school. Thus, under "Principals", the figure 11 is the sum of the 11 answers given by 11 different principals, and the figure 1 under "Teachers" refers to all the teachers in one school.

opportunity to decide to what extent his adult group is carrying out the purposes of the organization. His unfailing attendance helps to maintain the most important aspect of a sound relationship between home and school, because it confirms an attitude on his part that the opinions of every parent merit study and consideration by the school.

Teacher attendance could be improved by the inclusion of members of the faculty on parent-teacher committees, and in the meetings' programs. All principals should strive for increased teacher-attendance at meetings, setting such an example themselves, since it is one of the most effective ways of maintaining a helpful state of co-operation between home and school. As Table IX in Chapter IV makes clear, many units hold their meetings in the afternoon during school hours; thus, they also could encourage attendance on the part of the teachers by shifting at least part of their meetings to the evenings.

Table XXIII suggests that many principals, particularly among the non-P.T.A. school units, do not guide their adult groups in the constructive manner favored by educational authorities. Only nine of the fourteen P.T.A. principals have any influence on what shall compose the yearly program, the most significant aspect of each unit's activities, and but six of the sixteen principals associated with the other parent-school units are able to act as constructive leaders.

TABLE XXIII

PARTICIPATION BY WORCESTER ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN DIRECTION OF PARENT-SCHOOL UNIT
ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

How the Principal Participates	PTA					Other Parent-School Units				
	Yes	Sometimes	No	No. Ans.		Yes	Sometimes	No	No. Ans.	
Member of Managing Unit	13		1			8		7	1	
Advises on:										
Activities which will fulfill the unit's purpose	11		2	1		8		2	6	
Content of the yearly program	9	2	1	2		6	1	3	6	

All the P.T.A. principals hold an honorary vice-presidency in their units, but the title of the office should not prevent those who, at present, are strictly honorary members from assuming the advisory capacity to their units, which most writers on the subject agree should be maintained by them. Complete co-operation between adult groups of each unit and the principal on this matter should have a profound influence on improving the educational content of every program.

The reader can get a true picture of the value of the figures in Table XXIV only if he keeps in mind the fact that question 12, on which the table is based, allowed each principal to assume, in answering the question, that all of his teacher attended a given meeting. A comparison of the above table with Table XXII on teacher attendance discloses a considerable disparity between the figures in the first line of each table. The attendance table shows that only one principal claims to have all of his teachers present for every meeting, while no principal whose school is associated with other types of parent-school units made this assertion. The figures of Table XXIV reveal only the opportunities which parents have of meeting with teachers of the unit's school, assuming that the teachers do attend the meeting. Both the principal and the adult-group leaders of the schools where a monthly opportunity for contact between home and school are provided are to be congratulated on their attempts to promote

TABLE XXIV

WORCESTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' REPORT ON OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONAL CONTACT BETWEEN PARENT AND TEACHER AT MONTHLY MEETING

Frequency	PTA Units	Other Parent-School Units
Monthly	8	8
Every Other Month	1	
Semi-annually	1	1
As Occasion Demands		1
Annually	2	3
None	1	1
No answer	1	2
Total	14	16

co-operation between these two guiding forces of the child. Its effectiveness is directly dependent upon teacher-attendance, an item which can be greatly improved.

With the exception of two questionnaires which failed to answer question 13, all principals answered affirmatively that there had been an attempt to enroll in the unit all eligible parents and teachers. The figures on teacher-attendance previously set forth suggest that little co-operation has been achieved from this quarter. Methods of accomplishing this aim included mention of membership drives, personal invitation from the principal, and general invitation to all parents to visit public functions sponsored by the unit.

The principals' answers to questions 14 and 15 of the questionnaire are consolidated in Table XXV. Many of the answers such as "Invitations sent to every parent for every meeting" under question 14, and "Teachers appreciate P.T.A.'s helpfulness" under question 15 were not considered to be pertinent to the questions asked, and therefore no mention of them has been made in the table. Inasmuch as both questions emphasize the development of a constructive attitude toward parent education for child welfare, some of the methods listed in the table, such as "Social Meetings", are of doubtful value. A compilation of the figures of item 7 and item 8 of the table shows that 64 per cent of all teachers in schools have a P.T.A. are totally lacking guidance in realization of the value of parent-education, while 56 per cent of the

TABLE XXV

WORCESTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS' METHODS OF PRESENTING PARENT-EDUCATION TO PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Frequency	PTA		Other Par.-Sch. Units	
	Parents	Teachers	Parents	Teachers
Lectures				
a. by school officials	3		3	
b. by outside speakers	3		4	
Library fund to buy books on child care	1			
Exhibition of class activities	2			
Study group meetings	1			
Discussion groups	2	1		
Council meetings of P.T.A.	1			
Monthly Parent-Teacher magazine		1		
Through Parent-Teacher Program		1		
Principal-teacher discussion of individual problems of children		1		1
Parents' Night provides contact between parent and teacher			3	1
Notices of educational radio programs sent home			2	
Social meetings				2
Parent-teacher conference				3
Class demonstration for inquiring parents				1
No attempt	1	3		1
No answer to question		6		8

teachers whose schools sponsor a different type of parent-school unit are similarly handicapped. Many effective methods, such as "study group meetings", "discussion groups", and "lectures by school officials" are listed in the table, but the number of times each is listed suggests either that they are not generally used by the units, or that the majority of principals did not consider them worth-while means of inculcating parent-education when answering the questions.

The situation set forth in Table XXVI is one of the most satisfactory aspects of this part of the survey. Many of the activities listed, such as "Annual talk by Principal", and "Exhibit of school work" are commendable methods of familiarizing parents with the work of the school and should be used by all the units. The inclusion in the table of such items as "Spring Bazaar" and "Brownie and Girl-Scout Groups" is questionable, because the intent of the writer was to determine what the principal of each school was doing to inform the parents of his school's children primarily about the academic aspects of the curriculum.

Undoubtedly, there is some overlapping between items 1 and 2, but the necessity for distinguishing between the two types of evening programs is evident, since the evening program which provides for consultation between parent and teacher can be far more instructive to both parent and teacher.

TABLE XXVI

HOW WORCESTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS INFORM PARENTS OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Activity	PTA	Other Par.-Sch. Units
Parents' Night - exhibit of school work	10	1
Evening program with teachers in rooms for consultation by parents	2	1
Program of classroom activities by pupils	4	4
Entertainment by pupils	5	8
Education week	1	4
Invitations to parents to visit school during school hours	2	4
Annual talk by principal	1	2
School paper		1
Sports program		2
Spring Bazaar		1
Demonstration of school activities		1
Special parents' program	1	3
Open House each fall	1	
Brownie and Girl Scout groups	1	
Musical organizations	1	
No answer	1	2

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SURVEY OF MEMBER UNITS' PROGRAMS

Conclusions.-- The chief fault to be found with the programs of the Council units is the great variety of activities which are included in these programs. A varied means of presenting adult education for child welfare could not be considered objectionable, but when, as in this case, the variation consists of a great dispersion of interest, then it is reasonable to conclude that these units of the parent-teacher association have departed considerably from the announced objectives of the National Congress to which they look for leadership.

1. In the three years from 1944 to 1947 which the survey covers, the member units of the Worcester Council have shown a consistent lack of educational content in their yearly programs.
2. Many of the units' programs are not based on a yearly theme, and, when the theme is present, there is little or no relation between it and the activities of the meetings which make up the yearly program.
3. Speakers have dominated the yearly activities of

every unit, and the majority of their talks have not been pertinent to the subject of educating the parent for the welfare of the child.

4. Entertainment, social events, and other activities which are unrelated to a proper educational program have made up the plan of work of each unit to such an extent as to exclude a large percentage of meetings which should have been educationally profitable.

Recommendations.-- It is recommended, therefore, that:

1. Every unit should stop to reconsider the purpose of its organization as set forth in the objectives of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.
2. Each unit should determine its own needs, and decide to what extent and in what way each felt need can be met by the program of the coming year. Three possible ways of revealing each unit's needs are:
   a. Takepart of a meeting in the spring of the year to have the members answer a questionnaire on what they feel the unit's needs are.
   b. Interview the superintendent on his conception of the problem.
   c. Consult the principal for his views.
3. Every unit should plan a program around an educational theme and make the unrelated activities of the program, including the business meeting, subservient to

its educational aspects. If the membership shows an inclination to entertainment, try to furnish the kind which has educational value. The following worthwhile meetings could be a part of every yearly program of every unit:

a. The first meeting in the fall should be a "get-acquainted" meeting. Make sure that every parent is invited. Provide an opportunity for each parent to meet his child's teacher, and for each teacher to explain her grade's program to her visitors.

b. A seminar group meeting where parents contribute from their own study and experience.

c. One meeting devoted to discussion of the school budget.

d. One meeting devoted to the Christmas program.

e. One spring meeting given over to the subject of guidance for graduating students.

f. School exhibit of pupils' work at the end of the school year.

4. The program for the coming year should be submitted to a committee of the Council for approval. The Council could do much to aid program planning by:

a. Consulting with the program committee of each unit for the purpose of giving advice on how to select worth-while themes and build meetings around them.

b. Sending to each member unit all available information on topics which would be of educational value.

c. Compiling for circulation among the units a list of speakers whose talks would be distinctly aimed at educating parents for their childrens' welfare.

5. Each unit should evaluate the year's program by carefully investigating to what extent the objectives set up have been attained.

II. THE PRINCIPAL'S RELATION TO THE P.T.A.

Conclusions.-- A considerable number of the Worcester elementary school principals have shown a complete lack of appreciation for the possibilities of a parent-school organization, and, in many of those schools where units do exist, the principals have failed to grasp both the purpose of such a unit and the relationship which they should maintain with their unit.

1. Since almost one-half of the Worcester Elementary Schools do not have a parent-school organization, and, since a large percentage of the principals in charge of these schools without parent-school units have indicated their belief that such an organization would be of no benefit to their individual schools, it may be concluded that they are not aware of the

effectiveness of such an organization in maintaining co-operation between home and school.

2. The marked disparity between the size of the school population and the membership of the parent unit suggests a lack of interest on the part of most principals in maintaining the membership of the units associated with their schools.
3. A majority of those principals whose schools sponsor Parent-Teacher Association units are not familiar with the primary purpose of such a unit -- to educate the parent for the welfare of his child.
4. As a group, the principals have maintained good attendance at their units' meetings, but they have had little success in getting their teachers to follow this practice which would provide an opportunity for effective contact between parent and teacher.
5. Many principals do not have a voice in the formulation of their units' yearly programs.
6. A majority of the principals has failed to undertake a program designed to inform parents and teachers of the value of parent education for the welfare of the child.
7. Many principals have developed commendable methods of familiarizing the parents of their school children with the work going on in the school.

Recommendations.-- Since every elementary school principal should strive to promote closer co-operation between home and school, the two great educational forces for every child, it is recommended that:

1. Every elementary school principal in the city should give serious consideration to the formulation of a parent organization for his school.
2. Every principal who has received from parents of the children in his school a desire for a parent-school organization should proceed immediately to the organization of a unit which would best serve the needs of his school.
3. The principals of existing parent-school units should make energetic attempts to increase membership, that it may be as representative of the neighborhood as possible.
4. Every principal should convert his honorary membership to constructive leadership in the unit, and proceed to assume his responsibility for educating the parents of the unit about his school's work and procedure by active participation in the construction of the unit's yearly program.
5. All principals of schools having a parent-school unit should point out to their teachers the value of parent education, and should try to increase teacher attendance at the unit's meetings.

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